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How to Find Large Prime Contractors/Mentors

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Some Basics:

Start by thinking about your own company and career path and narrowing down a few leading large companies whom you admire and aspire to emulate. Reach out to those you are most comfortable with and who will also provide great advice.

Good mentors need to be honest, trustworthy and active listeners who focus on the issues identified by the mentee/protégé. At the most basic level, the mentor should have experience greater than your own and a track record of success in what they do.

Mentors however; only make up one part of the equation. The mentee/protégé need to do their part, too, in order to make the relationship a success. The successfulness of the mentorship is directly related to the success and satisfaction of both the mentors and the mentees.

5 Key Ingredients for a Successful Mentoring Relationship

- Reciprocity
- Mutual Respect
- Clear Expectations
- Personal Connections
- Shared Values

Key Ingredients (cont'd)

- **Reciprocity:** Besides being beneficial for the mentee/protégé, mentors should also find value in the relationship (i.e., willingness to learn the unwritten rules of the mentee company or industry, having a neutral sounding board for each's ideas, and sharing insights from past successes and failures, etc.)
- **Mutual Respect:** You want a mentor who's caring and invested in your professional growth, but who will also speak truth to you. And likewise with the protégé to the mentor. Sometimes they both need some constructive criticism or a reality check, while other times we need a high five or pat on the back. Mutual respect, when a two-way road, can provide those.
- **Clear Expectations:** Once identified, approach your potential mentor and the initial meeting as you would an interview. Be prepared to explain what you hope to learn and gain from the relationship, why you value their insight and expertise, as well as what you bring to the table. Don't take this phase lightly – you're laying the groundwork for a relationship that will hopefully last a lifetime.

Key Ingredients (cont'd)

- Personal Connections: Build a relationship with the prospective mentor. Don't cold call and go into a dinner time "robo-dial" type sales pitch on "why choose me."
- Shared Values: Have a similar value system in leadership and management. Knowing who you and/or your company are as a leader is critical before entering into a mentoring relationship. Only then can you align yourself with the right mentor.

Tips for Fostering the Mentor Relationship

- Choose the Right One: When searching for a mentor, think about those large contractors you want to emulate.
- Follow-up: In order for the relationship to work and grow, you need to make it a priority to stay in touch with your prospective mentor. If distance prevents personal face-to-face accessibility, effectively use email and phone to ensure regular contact.
- Be prepared: When you do meet with your prospective mentor, the last thing you want to do is waste their time. Consider setting an agenda before the meeting to ensure you cover the ground you desire to. The more organized and specific you are, the better the outcome.
- Be Appreciative: It's important to let the prospective mentor know you are grateful for the opportunity and the potential relationship. Mentors want to feel like they will be providing value to the relationship. Even prior to the formal relationship be sure to frequently tell your potential mentor how their assistance is helping you.
- Know when it's time for a change: Some mentor relationships just aren't meant to be. New business paths and strategies can sometimes change the dynamics of a relationship. When you see signs that the potential mentorship has run its course, it's OK to find someone else. It's important, though, to avoid ending on bad terms or severing ties completely. The once potential mentor can many times still serve as a valuable contact and reference.

Closing Thoughts

“THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX”

A mentor in the same business area as yours may be able to better understand your business challenges and concerns, but successful mentoring relationships don't necessarily have to happen within the same industry. Leadership philosophy may be more important.

It is possible that the perfect mentor may find you by chance and offer their mentorship, but being proactive in your search for your mentor is the best approach.

Remember, the single greatest benefit of having a mentor is that the protégé is able to learn firsthand from someone in a role they aspire to become.

Thank You

If you have additional questions with regard to this subject matter please feel free to contact me at:

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